



**INDIVIDUATION PROCESS OF RIGGAN THOMSON IN  
IÑÁRRITU'S *BIRDMAN (THE UNEXPECTED VIRTUE OF  
IGNORANCE)***

**A THESIS  
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
Thesis Project on American Cultural Studies in English Department  
Faculty of Humanities Diponegoro University**

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## **PRONOUNCEMENT**

The writer honestly declares that he compiles this thesis entitled Individuation Process of Riggan Thomson in Iñárritu's *Birdman (The Unexpeted Virtue of Ignorance)* Movie by himself without taking any result from other researchers in S-1, S-2, S-3, and in diploma degree of any university. The writer ascertains that he did not quote any material from other publications or someone else's paper except from the references mentioned

Semarang, 16<sup>th</sup> July 2019

Muhammad Hilfi Adanni

## MOTTO AND DEDICATION

“As a well-spent day brings happy sleep, so a life well spent brings happy death.”

— **Leonardo Davinci**

“Only when you drink from the river of silence shall you indeed sing.”

— **Khalil Gibran, The Prophet**

*This thesis is dedicated to my beloved family, friends and*

*everyone who made me who I am right now.*

*Thank you.*

## **APPROVAL**

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The writer realizes that this thesis is far from perfection. The writer therefore, will be glad to receive any constructive criticism and suggestion to make this thesis better. Finally, the writer expects that this thesis will be useful for the readers.

Semarang, 16<sup>th</sup> July 2019

Muhammad Hilfi Adanni

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## ABSTRACT

Human's mind is a complex maze which is not easy to conceive. It plays a substantial role in shaping people's personality. To find our true personality or to become aware of our true self, one has to face numerous psychological obstacles and balance all parts of the psyche. It is the process Jung called Individuation, the pivot of Jung's analytical psychology. Individuation is achieved by inducing the unconscious and the conscious elements from ourselves. The movie *Birdman (The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance)* illustrates the process of Individuation in its main character Riggan Thomson, as he struggles through his mid-life crisis. Using objective and psychological approaches, this study analyzes the character of Riggan Thomson by applying the archetypes of collective unconscious which Jung mentioned in his theory.

**Keywords:** Psyche, Individuation, Birdman, Archetypes

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of Study

Humans as social beings have always been in constant quest of expressing themselves. The act of expressing thoughts, feelings and experiences takes form in many formats and ways especially today, with all the sophisticated technologies available. Literature provides a mean of expression for humans in an aesthetic and alluring medium (Rancière, 2011: 65). Movie is the product of technological innovations which allows humans to create moving pictures, visualizing imaginations, ideas, and information, thus it becomes one of the medium of storytelling. Some may argue that movie is one of the forms of literature or art, but not few may disagree. According to Nicolae Sfetcu, movie is considered to be an important art form; films entertain, educate, enlighten and inspire audiences (2011: 3).

*Birdman (The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance)* tells the story of Riggan Thomson, a former movie star who was famous for playing a comic book superhero character Birdman, trying to rebuild his career as a “true” artist with a Broadway play that he wrote, produced, and starred. This movie explores the psychological states of the main character as he struggles to keep his career, family, lover, friends, and mental health in track, while he is overshadowed by his past and his mistakes. The story focuses on Riggan’s midlife crisis journey of discovering his true self.

The *Birdman* movie received many positive reviews and awards. It won four Oscars including Best Picture in Academy Awards 2015 (Fisher, 2015). It has a unique cinematography which appears like it was seamlessly shot in one take. The theme adapted for the movie is what Jung states in his theory that Individuation is a process in which a person's psychic state becomes individual (1959, 1969: 275)

There is an established term created by Carl Gustav Jung (1921) to describe the process of finding self. Carl Gustav Jung was an associate of Freud who branched out from Freud's psychoanalysis to create a different theory of personality called analytical psychology. Unlike Freud's theory which emphasizes unconscious from personal experiences, Jung put more focus on the universal unconscious which is inherited from our ancestors, a concept Jung called the collective unconscious.

In Jung's analytical psychology, the term individuation is described as the process of becoming an individual or whole person (Jung, 1959, 1969: 275). Individuation is relatively hard to attain and mostly achieved by people who have passed or are currently in their middle life. This process means managing psychological components to work harmoniously in their own capacity. To become individuated, a person has to limit their persona, acknowledge their anima or animus, face their shadow, and obtain an understanding of the self.

From the brief background above, the writer is interested in analyzing the individuation process of the main character of the movie as well as the intrinsic

aspects that form movie. There have been research papers about *Birdman*, discussing absurdism by Riswanto (2017) and the hierarchy of human needs by Hardyno (2017) in Iñárritu's *Birdman*. The writer hopes that the research regarding individuation process of the main character of *Birdman* will be useful for further study.

## **1.2 Scope of the Study**

To prevent the discussion from going beyond the main topic, the writer limits the scope of study to intrinsic aspects and extrinsic aspects. The intrinsic aspects contain narrative and cinematic elements of the movie. The extrinsic aspects analyze the individuation process of Riggan Thomson by applying archetypes in Carl Gustav Jung's theory to Riggan Thomson's behaviors.

## **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The Purpose of the Study consists of two aspects:

1. To examine the cinematic and narrative elements of the movie
2. To analyze Riggan Thomson's character and his journey through individuation process by applying the archetypes in Carl Gustav Jung's theory

## **1.4 Method of the Study**

### **1.4.1 Method of Research**

To analyze Iñárritu's *Birdman*, this study uses library research. Library research uses data collection and sources that can help to analyze the object of the study in this thesis. According to George, "library research

involves identifying and locating sources that provide factual information or personal/expert opinion on a research question; necessary component of every other research method at some point” (2008: 6). This study uses Iñárritu’s *Birdman* as the primary source. As the secondary sources, it uses articles, journals, books related to the theory and object of the study. This study gets the sources and references to support this analysis from available sources such as library and internet.

#### **1.4.2 Method of Approach**

The writer uses two approaches respectively. The first approach is objective approach, which deals with intrinsic aspects including narrative and cinematic elements of the movie. As quoted from Abrams, “objective criticism describes the literary product as a self-sufficient and autonomous object, or else as world-in-itself, which is to be contemplated as its own end, and to be analyzed and judged solely by intrinsic criteria” (1957, 2009: 63). The theme, character, setting and conflict are examined profoundly to offer a coherent explanation and analysis of the movie.

The second approach is psychological approach, which is applied to analyze the extrinsic aspects of the movie in accordance to Jung’s theory of individuation. Psychological approach itself according to Abrams is a method to analyze psychological aspects of a character or an author of a literary work (1957, 2009: 289).

## **1.5 Organization of the Writing**

### **CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION**

This chapter contains background of the study, scope of the study, purpose of the study, method of the study, and organization of the writing.

### **CHAPTER II: SUMMARY OF THE MOVIE**

This chapter contains the summary of *Birdman or (The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance)* movie and the biography of the director

### **CHAPTER III: THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK**

This chapter contains the theories, definitions, concepts and terms used to analyze the intrinsic aspect and Jung's theory of Individuation to analyze the Individuation process of the main character of *Birdman*

### **CHAPTER IV: ANALYSIS**

This chapter is the main part of the thesis. It contains the analysis of the intrinsic aspect and the Individuation process of the main character of *Birdman*

### **CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION**

This chapter contains the result of the whole discussion and analysis in the previous chapters.



## **CHAPTER II**

### **SUMMARY OF THE MOVIE**

#### **2.1 Summary of the Movie**

Riggan Thomson, a former Hollywood star, who after walked away from a superhero movie franchise which brought his name, is unable to receive the same success and recognition as he was before. He is haunted by the voice and hallucination of his previous character Birdman. The voices reside inside his head and keep reminding him of his mistakes and failures. Riggan tries to pursue a new career of “serious” artist by writing, directing, and starring in a Broadway play adapted from a short story “What We Talk About When We Talk About Love” by Raymond Carver.

In a rehearsal just a day before the first preview, Ralph one of the actors in Riggan’s play is struck by a spotlight set that falls into his head. Riggan later admits that he sabotaged it to make it happened. The reason is he could not stand Ralph’s terrible acting. He is looking for a new actor and one of his actresses suggests to him her former lover, Mike Shiner, a brilliant actor who is loved by critics and Broadway audiences. Riggan instantly likes him but not for long.

The first two previews are disastrous. In the first preview, Mike goes out of script and breaks character. He is mad because Riggan replaces the gin on stage with water. In the second preview, Mike tries to have real sex with Lesley on

stage. Riggan and Mike are involved in fight so many times and yet Mike stays, because Riggan has no choice.

Before the second preview, Riggan catches his daughter, Sam, smoking marijuana despite she is just out of rehabilitation. Their relationship is never good to begin with. Riggan scolds her and they get into an argument. It ends up with Sam telling her father something that hurts his feeling. She tells him that he is selfish and the only reason he is doing the play is to make him feels relevant again.

Meanwhile, Sam and Mike gets closer and they know each other better. During the last preview, Riggan sees and overhears Mike and his daughter Sam chatting around joyfully in the backstage like a couple. He gets distracted and frustrated, then, decides to go out for a smoke. He accidentally locks himself outside with his robe stuck in the door. Riggan has to leave his robe and walk naked with only his underwear through Times Square back to the theatre to perform the final act. Later he learns that his naked walk through the Times Square gets viral on the internet.

After the last preview, Riggan goes to a bar for a drink. He meets Tabitha Dickinson, a prominent critic in Broadway. She makes it clear to him that she is going to destroy his play by writing a bad review because she hates Hollywood celebrities who infiltrate Broadway plays, pretending to understand real art. In response, Riggan fights back and floods her with curses.

Later that night he buys whiskey and drinks himself to sleep on the street. When he wakes up, his hallucination gets worse. The voice of his old character, Birdman, now manifests in a physical form. It tells him to give people the action and blood that they always wanted, not depressing philosophical talks in a play. He starts seeing and experiencing things that are not real like apocalyptic warfare and flying around Manhattan.

Unexpectedly, the opening night goes well. During the intermission, the audiences talk about how great the first and second acts were. Meanwhile, in the dressing room, Riggan's former wife comes to pay a visit and congratulates him on his play. They have a talk about the old days when they were still together. After she leaves, Riggan prepares himself for the final act in which his character shoots himself. Instead of a prop gun, he intentionally picks a real gun and shoots himself on stage. The audiences are astonished and they give the play standing applause.

Riggan wakes up in a hospital the day after. His face is covered in bandages and he is accompanied by his former wife, daughter and a friend. He survives his "suicide" attempt." It turns out he only shot his nose off. His friend tells him that the play receives a good review by Tabitha Dickinson for its "super-realism." After they leave, Riggan goes to bathroom and tears off his bandages. He looks and examines deeply into his new surgical nose. He walks away from the bathroom to the window and he looks up at the bird outside. Inspired by the birds, he opens the window and climbs it out. When Sam returns, she notices that Riggan is gone and the window is opened. She searches for him by looking at the

ground below the window, but she finds nothing. After that, she gradually turns her head up and starts smiling.

## 2.2 Biography of the Director

Alejandro González Iñárritu is a renowned director and screenwriter of Mexican descent. He is famous for his award-winning movies like *Amores Perros*, *Birdman*, and *The Revenant*. He was born on August 15, 1963, in Mexico City. His career in cinematic world began in 1990s when he worked in a TV company in Mexico as a producer and later established his own production company, Zeta Films. *Amores Perros*, his first film, which was released in 2000, received the best foreign language film nomination in 2001 Academy Awards. He came back in 2003 with his second movie, *21 Grams*, starring Naomi Watts, Sean Penn and Benicio del Toro in which Watts and Del Toro were nominated for their acting. In 2006, *Babel*, his next work continued to pave Iñárritu's fame by stealing seven nominations in 79<sup>th</sup> Academy Awards, including Best Picture and Best Director. In the recent years, his two movies *Birdman* (2014) and *The Revenant* (2015) won him two Best Director awards in Academy, two years in row, 2015 and 2016. Besides that, *Birdman* was nominated in nine nominations in 2015 Academy Awards and it won Best Picture and Best Original Screenplay award. (Papish, 2016)

## **CHAPTER III**

### **THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **3.1 Intrinsic Aspect**

##### **3.1.1 Narrative Elements**

Narrative elements are elements that constitute the story in a literature work. As Abrams states, “a narrative is a story, whether told in prose or verse, involving events, characters, and what the characters say and do” (1957, 2009: 208). In this thesis, the author only focuses on the certain elements that support the analysis like theme, character, setting, and conflict.

##### **3.1.1.1 Theme**

Theme serves as a general concept or idea in fiction or prose. The development of a story in fiction is within the theme which the literary work adapted. According to Holman, “Theme is the abstract concept which is made concrete through its representation in person, action, and image in the work” (1960: 486). Theme can be asserted implicitly or explicitly.

##### **3.1.1.2 Character**

Character, one of the elements that constructs a story is essential to the development of events and actions in the story. Taylor states in his book that “It is, of course not possible to have actions without characters; events are determined by character and character is also defined by events” (1981: 62). The process of creating a character, or called characterization has various methods. It can be through direct description and dialogues or indirect methods like pattern of

speech, mannerism, thoughts, and appearance, all characteristics that require readers or audience to perceive through observation (Taylor, 1981: 63).

Characters are divided into several categories according to their importance, role, and development: protagonist, antagonist, major characters, minor characters (Lyon, 2004: 7). Protagonist is the main character in a plot. A story in the novel or movie revolves around the protagonist. Meanwhile, antagonist is the opposite force of protagonist. Alderson in *Plot Whisperer* states:

The protagonist of a story is the character most changed by the dramatic action. All other characters and the setting(s), too, influence the protagonist's journey toward her goal directly, indirectly, or thematically. The growth and transformation of the protagonist is the line that runs through the entire plot (2011: 124)

Major characters are characters of moderate to great significance. They are maybe on the side of protagonist or antagonist. Although, they undergo character development, their level of character development is below the protagonist. Minor characters are characters of lesser significance, which serve little purpose to the story with little to no character development.

### **3.1.1.3 Conflict**

Conflict is a friction of desires, actions, or ideas between the two opposing forces in a story. Conflict plays an important role in building tension and driving the course of the story. Holman states that “It is conflict which provides the elements of interest and suspense in any form of fiction, whether it be a drama, a novel, or a short story.” (1960: 105).

According to McKee, conflict is divided into three levels, namely, inner conflict, personal conflict, and extra-personal conflict (1997: 145)

#### **3.1.1.3.1 Inner Conflict**

Inner conflict is a conflict where a character struggles against himself. The conflict is caused by the innermost elements of the character such as mind, body, and emotions.

#### **3.1.1.3.2 Personal Conflict**

Personal conflict is a conflict which arises from disagreement between two or more close-bound characters. It could be friends, family, or lovers.

#### **3.1.1.3.3 Extra-Personal Conflict**

Extra-personal conflict is a conflict between a character and individual outside of their personal life (employer/employee, doctor/patient) or even a greater force like society, institutions, and nature.

While, according to Holman, conflict is divided into four kinds, conflict against nature, conflict against other persons, conflict against society, conflict against struggles of mastery (1960: 105)

#### **3.1.1.4 Setting**

Setting is the physical or non-physical condition of the surroundings, which provides background of actions in the story. Setting gives the audiences sense of place and sense of time. Taylor highlights the importance of setting. “Setting is a major factor in the formulation of subject matter and a direct

influence on the expression of theme” (1981: 69). Abrams divides setting into three: place, time, and social environment.

#### **3.1.1.4.1 Setting of Place**

Setting of place is the physical location in which the story takes place. It can be described in general like in a country or a city. It can also be described in a more specific way like in the building, or in the room.

#### **3.1.1.4.2 Setting of Time**

Setting of time is the duration and the period of time in the story. It marks the hour, day, week, month, season, year and specific time in the story.

#### **3.1.1.4.3 Setting of environment**

Setting of Environment is the general political, moral, cultural, mental, and emotional condition in society and characters’ surroundings in the story.

### **3.1.2 Cinematic Elements**

Cinematic Elements involve technical aspect of capturing narrative elements into a moving picture with sound. Cinematic elements are responsible in manifesting feeling, mood, tone, and ambience in the movie. Cinematic elements include camera angle, camera distance, and sound, (Bordwell & Thompson, 2017)

#### **3.1.2.1 Camera Angle**

Camera angle is the placement of camera in taking pictures. It can be inclined or direct. Camera angle can imply certain meaning, or tone to the movie. There are three general position of camera angle: straight-on angle, high angle, low angle (Bordwell & Thompson, 2017: 188)



### 3.1.2.1.1 Straight-on angle

It is the most common camera angle. The camera is placed in a neutral position at same eye-level of the object or subject in the movie. (Picture 3.1)

### 3.1.2.1.2 High Angle

The placement of the camera in this technique is above eye level. The camera captures picture from above the subject and looking down at it, making the subjects look insignificant and powerless. (Picture 3.2)

### 3.1.2.1.3 Low Angle

Low angle shot is a shot taken from below the subject. Sometimes it is used to imply domination and superiority. (Picture 3.3)



*Picture 3.1*  
(Boardwell & Thomson 2017: 188)



*Picture 3.3*  
(Boardwell & Thomson 2017: 188)



*Picture 3.2*  
(Boardwell & Thomson 2017: 188)

### **3.1.2.2 Camera Distance**

Camera distance is the placement of the camera relating to the distance between the camera and the subject. It can also be measured by the scale of human bodies in the frame (Bordwell, 2017: 189).

#### **3.1.2.2.1 Extreme Long Shot**

Extreme long shot is taken from great distance. It captures a large area of the setting. Characters are barely visible or not visible at all. It is used for example, to capture a landscape of a city (Picture 3.4)

#### **3.1.2.2.2 Long Shot**

In the long shot, the presence of characters in the frame is more notable, but the surroundings are still more dominant. The entire body of subjects in this shot are shown in the frame from head to toe. (Picture 3.5)

#### **3.1.2.2.3 Medium Long Shot**

This shot offers a balance composition between subjects and background in the frame. It captures the subjects from their knees to their heads. (Picture 3.6)

#### **3.1.2.2.4 Medium Shot**

This technique captures the subjects from their waists to their heads. The characters' expression and gesture are more visible. It usually depicts conversations or dialogues between characters. (Picture 3.7)

#### **3.1.2.2.5 Medium Close-Up**

Medium close-up provides a more detailed depiction of the subject. It frames the subject from his chest to his head. (Picture 3.8)

### 3.1.2.2.6 Close Up

This shot focuses on a small object or just one part of the body of the subject, like hand, head, legs, foot. The purpose of this shot is to highlight the expression and gesture of the character. (Picture 3.9)

### 3.1.2.2.7 Extreme Close-Up

Extreme close-up is usually used to enhance a very small object or show a part of facial feature. The most common example is a shot which displays only eyes or lip. (Picture 3.10)



*Picture 3.4*  
(Bordwell & Thomson, 2017: 189)



*Picture 3.5*  
(Bordwell & Thomson, 2017: 189)



*Picture 3.6*  
(Bordwell & Thomson, 2017: 189)



*Picture 3.7*  
(Bordwell & Thomson, 2017: 189)



*Picture 3.8*  
(Bordwell & Thomson, 2017: 189)



*Picture 3.9*  
(Bordwell & Thomson, 2017: 189)



*Picture 3.10*  
(Bordwell & Thomson, 2017: 189)

### 3.1.2.3 Sound

Sound as a part of cinematic elements, deals with audio component in the movie, unlike its counterpart cinematography which deals with visual. Sound shapes viewer's experience in watching a movie. Therefore, filmmakers have to pay attention in choosing the right sound for their movies. Nelmes divides movie sound into three categories – dialogue, music, and sound effects (2012: 100)

The presence of music creates moods and feelings which play an important role in building suspense and dramatic scenes in the movie. Sound effects generate the sound of environment and reality in the movie. Dialogue is verbal communication between two or more characters in the story. Dialogue is often but not always, more important than music and sound effects. (Bordwell, 2017: 272).

## **3.2 Extrinsic Aspects**

### **3.2.1 Individuation**

Jung as quoted by Papadopoulos stated that “Individuation is an expression of that biological process, by which every living thing becomes what it was destined to become from the beginning” (Papadopoulos 2006: 45). Individuation is a term given by Carl Gustav Jung to describe the process of someone in finding out who they are and achieving their full psychological development. The process of individuation aims to make people realize the true nature of themselves, who they really are, different and yet related to others.

To put it lightly, individuation can be described as being aware and embracing ourselves as who we are. It means accepting all of the traits, personalities, advantages and disadvantages which lie within us (McNelly 2010: 5). The journey to discover one’s self is long and not easy. One often makes mistakes along the way. Our mistakes shape our characters and personalities. They are also an important part of the individuation process.

When one follows the path of individuation, when one lives one’s own life, one must take mistakes into the bargain: life would not be complete without them. There is no guarantee – not for a single moment (Jung 1961, 1989: 297).

Individuation means achieving a balance to all parts of the psyche. To understand individuation, the understanding of Jung’s concept of psychology (analytical psychology) is required. Jung viewed that mind or psyche consists of conscious and unconscious aspects. Conscious aspect is everything that one is aware from himself. At the center of it lies Ego. Everything on the conscious is

experienced through Ego. However, Ego is not the heart of one's personality. Therefore, Jung considered the conscious as something less important than the unconscious in the process of individuation (Feist, 2013: 107)

The unconscious is something deep inside us and it is hard to identify. One is often unaware about it. Jung divided the unconscious into two categories, personal unconscious and collective unconscious. Personal unconscious takes its source from hidden, overlooked, suppressed inner parts of an individuals like memories, experiences, urges, events and others. Therefore, every one of us has different and unique personal unconscious, since individual experiences, memories, and urges are distinct from one another (Feist, 2013: 108).

On the deeper layer of the unconscious lies collective unconscious. Collective unconscious is a universal unconscious which is common to all. It originates from our ancestral parts (Jung, 1959, 1969: 4). The collective unconscious is not a collection of notion which are inherited from our ancestor. It is an instinct and set of behavior to react in certain ways to some circumstances that have been experienced and transmitted through generations of humankind. Some of these instincts and set of behavior, throughout countless repetitions and generations have become inseparable parts of us. They are called the archetypes. According to Jung, there are many archetypes. The most significant which contribute to the process of Individuation are Persona, Shadow, Anima, Animus, and Self (Papadopoulos, 2006: 85)

### **3.2.1.1 Persona**

The most easily identifiable archetype is persona. Feist in regards to Jung explains that it is the outer face one presents to the world, the role that individuals play in life. The persona is not the essence of what one is. It is how one appears to others in the world (2013: 111). Jung states in his book that “One could say, with a little exaggeration, that the persona is that which in reality one is not, but which oneself as well as others think one is” (1959, 1969: 123)

The creation of persona is affected by external factors like culture, time, life stage development, and society values. Persona is the mask which one wears to receive approval and acceptance from society. People hide behind their persona in order to survive in the world, because persona is usually rewarded with cash and appreciation.

Persona may be illusive, dangerous. It can prevent us from fully achieving individuation, if one puts too much focus on persona in our identity. It can overshadow our inner self and make us unaware of our truly self. Jung as cited by Feist said that a person who bases his identity around persona has no real personality. He is not an individual but a society’s puppet (Feist, 2013: 111)

### **3.2.1.2 Shadow**

Shadow is the opposite of persona. It is the part of ourselves which one hide, reject, and disown. Shadow reflects the dark side of human being which contains darker psychological traits, and immoral side of our nature.

“The shadow personifies everything that the subject refuses to acknowledge about himself and yet is always thrusting itself upon him directly or indirectly – for instance, inferior traits of character and other incompatible tendencies” (Jung, 1959, 1969: 284)

People tend not to want to be reminded of their weaknesses. This reason alone makes it really hard for us to overcome our shadow. To be whole, one must seek, recognize and confront his shadow. Sometimes it is easy to see the ugly side in others, but it takes courage to acknowledge it in ourselves. A person who fails to identify his shadow will be powerless in front of it and he eventually acts according to it (Feist, 2013: 111)

Jung in his book, *AION Researches into The Phenomenology of The Self* (1959), also said that shadow is not necessarily “evil.” In order to fit in with society values and their environment by associating with persona, people tend to reject certain characteristics from themselves which are not negative, but rather not viewed as prestigious by social standards. Therefore shadow can contain some good traits like creativity.

“If it has been believed hitherto that the human shadow was the source of all evil, it can now be ascertained on closer investigation that the unconscious man, that is, his shadow, does not consist only of morally reprehensible tendencies, but also displays a number of good qualities, such as normal instincts, appropriate reactions, realistic insights, creative imposes, etc.” (Jung, 1959: 266)

### **3.2.1.3 Anima and Animus**

The other archetype one has to encounter is Anima or Animus. Anima is the female psychological traits within men and animus is the male psychological traits within women. Anima associates with moods and feelings, while animus



associates with thinking and reasoning. The anima in men is responsible for the care, compassion and other female traits within them, while the animus in women is responsible for the argumentative and decisive actions and other male traits within them (Feist, 2013: 112)

“If I were to attempt to put in a nutshell the difference between man and woman in this respect, i.e., what it is that characterizes the animus as opposed to the anima, I could only say this: as the anima produces moods, so the animus produces opinions (Jung 1953, 1966: 283)”

The anima derives from the unconscious notion of femininity which is originated from our ancestor and men’s early experience with women (mother, sister and lovers). Meanwhile, the animus is the opposite. It derives from the unconscious notion of masculinity which is originated from our ancestor and women’s early experience with men (father, brother, lover). Anima or animus sometimes appear as a projection to someone that one is attracted to (Jung, 1961, 1989: 391).

Jung’s view of men and women to describe anima and animus is heavily influenced by gender stereotypes from his time, which is very traditional. Despite the stereotypes attached to it, the concept has helped people to overcome the boundaries of gender stereotypes and accept themselves as they are. (Papadoupoulos, 2006: 116)

### 3.2.1.4 Self

Self is both an archetype and the goal of individuation. The concept of self, as both an archetype and the goal of individuation, may sound paradoxical, because the concept of self only came out later in years after Jung had written several works. It also appeared and mentioned gradually. The definition changed bit by bit as Jung unraveled the mystery of self through research and investigation. He began to fill out what was missing from his theory and reformed it (Papadopoulos, 2006: 157).

Jung describes self as an inclination that everyone has to achieve perfection, development, and fulfillment in their life. Self acts as a magnet that pulls and holds together all archetypes in the process of individuation. It acts as the central archetype. It is the most significant of all archetypes (Feist, 2013: 115). Jung in *Psychology and Alchemy* (1968) states:

"The self is not only the center but also the whole circumference which embraces both conscious and unconscious; it is the center of this totality, just as the ego is the center of consciousness." (1968: 41)

As the center and totality of the psyche, Self is the main point of Jung's concept of psychology. "The self is the goal towards which the process of individuation strives" (Papadopoulos, 2006: 153). In order to achieve this, individuals have to face their unconsciousness, minimize their persona, be aware of their shadows, and acknowledge their anima or animus

## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS

#### 4.1 Intrinsic Aspect

##### 4.1.1 Theme

*Birdman* explores several themes in its story, the most prominent and noticeable one is identity crisis. Riggan Thomson, a former superhero movie star finds himself torn between his former role and his new role as a Broadway director and actor. He tries to pave a new career and life but he is constantly reminded of his past by all the circumstances around him and voices inside his head. Riggan puts everything into this new career and he is willing to sacrifice anything for it. He is very determined to make the Broadway play a success. However, no matter how hard he tries to establish a new image, he will always be known as the man who plays Birdman.

Evident supporting this claim can be seen in the picture 4.1. From a scene which is taken with medium longshot, It shows Riggan removes a poster of his former character Birdman, a gift from his crew. It shows how Riggan feels about his former character. He is trying to get rid of everything associated with his past identity because he is trying to set up a new one. Another evident show that after the first preview, critics wrote an article in newspaper entitled “Riggan Thomson, better known as the face of the Birdman films, tries not to lay an egg on Broadway.” This angers Riggan and makes him feel humiliated. His expression is

depicted in the picture 4.2 which is taken with medium shot following the dialogue between Riggan and one of his crew who brings him the news.



*Picture 4.1*  
(00:10:57)



*Picture 4.2*  
(00:54:35)

## 4.1.2 Characters

### 4.1.2.1 Riggan Thomson

Riggan Thomson is the major character and protagonist in this movie. The story of *Birdman* centers around him and it is shown from third perspective. Riggan is a middle-aged single parent man with one daughter named Sam. He and his wife were divorced after they got into an argument which ended up with Riggan throwing a kitchen knife at her.

As a former Hollywood star going east, Riggan has to put more effort to prove he is worthy. It is because Broadway critics often take Hollywood stars lightly. Riggan is really ambitious and infested in his play. He goes as far as intentionally dropping a spotlight on one of his actor who he deems really terrible. He makes it look like an accident in order to replace him with a better actor. He also refinances his daughter future house in order to fund the play.

Besides that, Riggan's actions also indicate that he is really temperamental. In picture 4.3, shot from medium close-up combine with straight on angle to show Riggan's expression, Riggan is depicted having a fight with Mike over what Mike said about Riggan on the interview with a news agency. He beats Mike continuously with the newspaper, chokes him, and eventually punches him straight on his face. Moreover, Riggan is shown trashing his dressing room after the fight because he is frustrated by many things like voices inside his head, failed previews, and being humiliated (Picture 4.4). The shot is taken from medium long shot distance to show a balance picture of Riggan destructive action and the damage he has done to his dressing room.



*Picture 4.3*  
(00:56:56)



*Picture 4.4*  
(01:01:23)

Several dialogues in the movie show that Riggan is selfish. He does not want to hear what others say and he keeps insisting on others to listen to what he says. The dialogue in the minute (00:39:18) during an argument between Riggan and his daughter proves it.

Riggan : This. This. What's that?  
 Sam : It's pot. Relax  
 Riggan : Relax? You can't do this to me  
 Sam : To you?  
 Riggan : Oh shut up, you know what I'm talking about  
 Sam : Oh yeah you're talking about you. What else is new?

(Iñárritu, 2014: *Birdman* 00:39:18 - 00:39:25)

The dialogue above implicates that Riggan is always talking about himself. From what she says, Sam, Riggan's daughter is accustomed and familiar with his father selfish talks of himself. She recognizes it at once.

#### 4.1.2.2 Mike Shiner

Mike Shiner is the antagonist of this movie, the opposing force which pushes Riggan to the edge and makes his life harder. Mike is a young talented Broadway actor, loved by critics and Broadway audience. He is known to be the main selling point of a play, because every drama that he stars, sells ticket. Mike is the kind of person who does not care about what people think of him. He does whatever he wants to do without a single thought. It could even be said that Mike is selfish. His indifferent manner more often than not harms other people. In the dialogue between Sam and Mike in (00:50:25 – 00:50:38), Mike admits that he does not care whether people like him or not.

Sam : Why do you act like a dick all the time? Do you just do it to antagonize people?  
 Mike : Maybe  
 Sam : You really don't give a shit if people like you or not  
 Mike : Not really

(Iñárritu, 2014: *Birdman*: 00:50:25 – 00:50:38)

Authenticity is what Mike cares more than anything else on stage. In the rehearsal, Mike does not even bother to look at the script and just goes with the flow of conversations, predicting his next line. He does not want to be bound by it and he tries to make the dialogues feel more real and less artificial. In the first preview, he even goes to the extent of breaking character when he finds out that Riggan had replaced the gin on stage with water. His character is supposed to be drunk, so he needs to be drunk, he argues. Quoted from (00:24:57 – 00:25:06), when the audience start booing at Mike when he is breaking character, Mike says “Come on people, don’t be so pathetic, stop looking at the world through your cellphone screen! Have a real experience! Does anybody give a shit about truth other than me?”

#### **4.1.2.3 Sam**

Sam is the daughter of Riggan Thomson. She also works with Riggan as his personal assistant, tending to whatever he needs. She hates her job but she does not have any choice. Sam is struggling with her drug addiction. She is just out of rehabilitation but she keeps relapsing and her father finds out about it. It leads to a quarrel, which makes Sam relationship with his father even worse. Sam’s relationship with his father is never good to begin with. In the dialogue between Sam and Mike (01:06:23 – 01:06:41) it shows the reason why Sam does not like his father.

Mike : What is the worst thing that he did to you?  
 Sam : He was never around  
 Mike : Yeah? I mean, so what? That was it?  
 Sam : No. It was how he tried to make up for it by constantly trying to convince me that I was special

(Iñárritu, 2014: *Birdman* 01:06:23 – 01:06:41)

However, at the half end of the movie, Sam's heart begins to soften for his father. Sam sees his father on the brink of collapse from all the troubles which come from the play. Those troubles have been burdening him for a long time. She starts to feel sorry to see his father in such a bad shape. In the picture 4.5, the focus of the camera shifts from Riggan to Sam, showing her concerned expression about his father's mental health. Picture 4.6 shows Sam laying on her father chest when he is hospitalized after his stunt of shooting himself on stage.



Picture 4.5  
(01:18:42)



Picture 4.6  
(01:48:39)

#### 4.1.2.4 Tabitha Dickinson

Tabitha Dickinson is a middle-aged white woman, a prominent and respected critic in New York theatres. The critic that matters the most is hers. What she writes on a Time article is what determines the success of a play and how long it will last on theatre. Tabitha hates folks from Hollywood. She thinks of them as entitled, selfish, spoiled children. They lack of experience and



understanding of the art of theatre, and yet they think they are qualified to perform in Broadway.

Tabitha swears that she will destroy Riggan's play without even seeing it. She is mad because Riggan uses the space in St. James theatre, which might have been used for something better, a real Broadway play performed and directed by someone who is competent. However, in the end Tabitha writes a good review about Riggan's play. She regards it as a unique and new form of Broadway and names it "super realism." Tabitha could have written it honestly or just out of fear of getting backlash from writing a bad review, since Riggan shot himself on stage and people think of him as a hero. In the picture 4.7, it can be seen that Tabitha is the only one who does not give a standing applause, and in the picture 4.8, Tabitha is seen leaving the theatre early.



*Picture 4.7*  
(01:42:46)



*Picture 4.8*  
(01:42:58)

### **4.1.3 Conflict**

#### **4.1.3.1 Inner Conflict**

The inner conflict which Riggan faces is all manufactured in his own mind. He is tortured by his own desires, the desires to become relevant again. He wants to be known as a Broadway actor, a “real” artist, performing “real” art. This very desire leads him into a mental train wreck which tears him apart. The voices of Birdman, his former character are filling his head with the talk of how great and successful they were (Riggan and Birdman), about how they had it all before Riggan threw everything out of the window. The voices also keep on saying of how miserable Riggan now, spitting out the hard truth. They tell Riggan to stop pretending to be a Broadway actor and just go back on playing as Birdman. The inner voices which Riggan hears in his head represent his own doubt. He wants to quit but he cannot, since he put so much on stake, his dream, his reputation, his career, and his wealth. Here is the conversation between Riggan and his producer, Jake, which shows Riggan’s frustration.

Riggan : I think we should cancel the preview  
 Jake : What?  
 Riggan : I'm tired dude. I can't do this anymore, Jake  
 Jake : That's a joke right?  
 Riggan : You know, I don't think this is for me. They're laughing at me.

(Iñárritu, 2014: *Birdman* 01:02:19 – 01:02:39)

#### 4.1.3.2 Personal Conflict

The personal conflict in this movie is between Riggan and his daughter Sam. Riggan is seen as a failed father figure. Since Riggan and his wife were divorced, Riggan has to take care of Sam all by himself. However, being an actor and a father at the same time is not easy. Riggan has to manage his time for his career and his family, but he ends up getting too caught up with his career. He leaves only a little time and attention for Sam. Broken home and lack of parental attention are arguably the reason why Sam used drugs.

To keep Sam in his watch while Riggan is working on his play, he made Sam as his personal assistant. She takes care of Riggan's schedule and personal needs. Sam on the other hand, is not very passionate about it. Sam does not really like his father that much, because he was never around and he is selfish. Another reason why Sam dislikes his father is, his father always tries to steer her life and sees her as a kid. It is seen in the dialogue between Riggan, Mike, and Sam in (00:16:57 – 00:17:16).

Mike : So who are you?  
 Riggan : That's Sam, my daughter  
 Mike : Wow that's amazing. You don't look anything like each other. What do you do?  
 Sam : Um.. I'm  
 Riggan : She's my assistant. Works with me  
 Mike : And does she talk and speak?  
 Sam : She does. Yeah. She can even sit or stay or roll over, if you have any treats

(Iñárritu, 2014: *Birdman* 00:16:57 – 00:17:16)

From the dialogue above, it is shown how Riggan continuously interrupts Sam when she tries to speak, even though the questions which Mike asked are directed to Sam. Sam responds with sarcastic remark at the end of the dialogue, which describes how Sam feels about the way her father has been treating her.

#### **4.1.3.3 Extra personal conflict**

Several extra personal conflicts occur in this movie. The first one is Riggan vs society that always brands him as Birdman. Riggan wants to get rid of his past character but all that society care is just mere sensational actions. It understates the efforts which Riggan puts in his Broadway play. The theatre art which Riggan deems as more sophisticated and classy does not really pick general people's attention. When Riggan walks the Time Square almost naked, only in his underwear, as shown in the picture 4.9, taken from straight angle with medium shot, all the people there shout about is "Birdman." Even though the theatre is so close to Time Square and the billboard displaying Riggan's play is there, not a single people mention his play. After the video goes viral, Riggan gets coverage

from many the TV stations, but none of them mention that he is currently working on a play.

Another extra personal conflict that occurs is between Riggan, Tabitha, and Mike, persons outside of Riggan's personal life. The dispute between Riggan and Mike happens because of Mike's selfish behaviors. He acts according to his will without the slightest thought of other's feeling. For example, Mike goes off script on the first preview and ruins it. He also says embarrassing things about Riggan on an interview. Both of those put Riggan in a bad spot. Meanwhile, the conflict with Tabitha is resulted from Tabitha's antagonism to Riggan, and her stubbornness on hating Riggan's play and giving him a bad review. Tabitha's overbearing nature and treatment to Riggan gets him to his nerve. Riggan expression is shown in the picture 4.10, taken with medium close up. The conflict has escalated between Riggan and Tabitha after Riggan throws curses at her and rips the paper which she has been working for.



*Picture 4.9*  
(01:14:44)



*Picture 4.10*  
(01:24:05)

#### 4.1.4 Setting

##### 4.1.4.1 Setting of Place

In general, the movie takes place in Manhattan, New York City. The scenes in the movie are mostly taken at St. James theatre. The appearance of the front side of St. James theatre can be seen in the picture 4.11, which was taken from low angle with long shot technique. The set of St. James theatre can be divided into the stage, backstage, and Riggan's dressing room.

Other places which the movie was taken might include the bar where Riggan has an argument with Tabitha Dickinson, Time Square where Riggan walks naked, and hospital where Riggan was treated after the incident. The pictures of those places are shown respectively in Picture 4.12 – Picture 4.14.



*Picture 4.11*  
(01:34:10)



*Picture 4.12*  
(01:20:53)



*Picture 4.13*  
(01:14:30)



*Picture 4.14*  
(01:46:22)

#### 4.1.4.2 Setting of Time

The movie does not explicitly state the specific time in which it takes place. However, it can be concluded from some scenes that the movie takes place in present day, around the time when it was released. The shot in picture 4.15 shows Sam showing Riggan that his video of walking naked in Time Square goes viral. It appears that Sam's phone is Iphone 4, which was released in 2011. The intensity of the sun, the color of the leaves on trees, and the article of clothing which people in the movie wear, indicate that the movie occurs during spring season. In spring, the temperature has risen but it is not warm enough. So, some people still wear thin outer wears and some do not. Picture 4.16, taken with long shot technique, displays the clothing which people wear.



*Picture 4.15*  
(01:20:14)



*Picture 4.16*  
(01:33:41)

#### 4.1.4.3 Setting of Environment

The New York's upper middle class lifestyle is best described as the social environment which the movie portrays. The Broadway theatre culture in New York is mainly popular among the upper middle class inhabitants of the city. In the conversation between Riggan and Sam in (00:39:53 – 00:40:53) Sam says, "You're doing a play based on a book that was written 60 years ago for a

thousand of rich old white people, whose only real concern is gonna be where they go to have their cake and coffee when it's over.” It implies that the general demographic of theatergoers and stereotypical audiences of Broadway are rich old white people. It is also shown in the picture 4.17 below.



*Picture 4.17  
(1:34:40)*

## **4.2 Extrinsic Aspect**

### **4.2.1 Individuation**

The analysis of individuation in this study covers the main character Riggan, as the key focus of the analysis. Riggan's journey, his actions and behaviors are taken into account in determining his individuation process. Furthermore, the information above is analyzed by applying the four archetypes of persona, shadow, anima / animus, and self. The four archetypes determine whether Riggan Thomson has encountered all of them and become individuated. As stated before, in order to achieve individuation a person has to bring their conscious and unconscious into a balance and acknowledge his archetypes.



#### 4.2.1.1 Persona

Persona is a projection which one wants the public and himself to see and think of. The Persona which Riggan possesses is a Broadway actor. He wants himself as well as public to think that and know him as the Persona he wears. Despite Riggan was a movie star and Hollywood actor, he has no experience working in Broadway. Riggan's decision to enter the Broadway world represents the image or the persona of him which he wants to present to the general masses. The transition from a Hollywood actor to a Broadway actor means that Riggan has become something he is not. Riggan creates this Persona to make him feel that he is working on something more important. Broadway is generally seen as a more prestigious art form, rather than Hollywood superhero movies. How Riggan feels about his work is shown in the conversation below.

Riggan	: Look I'm trying to do something important
Sam	: This is not important
Riggan	: It's important to me, okay. Maybe not to you, your cynical friends, whose only ambition is to go viral, but to me, God, this is my career! It's my chance to finally do some work that actually means something.
Sam	: That means something to who? You had a career dad, before the third comic book movie. Before people started to forget who was inside that Bird costume.

(Iñárritu, 2014: *Birdman*: 00:39:27 – 00:39:53)

Riggan takes pride in his Broadway work. He treasures it and tries to make a success out of it. Unlike his past works which he refuses to be associated with, he wants his Broadway career to be the first thing that comes to people's mind when they think of him. Riggan left his role as Birdman and said no to Birdman 4

in order to do the play. One of the main motivations for Riggan to do this play is a piece of note that Raymond Carver gave to him after seeing Riggan's performance in a high school play. It says "Thank you for an honest performance." This note gave Riggan a sense of validation and approval, the rewards which people earn from their Persona.

The most obvious and visible appearance of Riggan's persona manifests in his performance on stage. Picture 4.18, which was taken with medium close-up from a straight on angle, shows Riggan giving a monologue in one of the scenes of the play. Riggan wears a wig to cover his baldness and suits to match his character outer look. On the contrary, picture 4.19 shows Riggan off the stage in his true form and look. He has a bare face, bald head and he wears a t-shirt underneath a worn-out coat.

Being an actor and acting on a stage is essentially the same as putting a "mask." When Riggan is on the stage, he pretends to be someone else, in this case a character which he plays. The character he plays, the set and environment, the genre and tone of the play are very different from what he used to work on in Hollywood. The play is full of philosophical talk and it has a more serious tone. Meanwhile his movies were more of an action packed movie, full of fights, bloods, explosions, and suspense. The two, new and past works of Riggan Thomson are in contrast with each other. The role of Birdman has grown on Riggan for many years. It has ingrained in his nature and become a part of Riggan's personality. Therefore, Riggan sudden turn to a whole new acting experience of Broadway has led him to create a persona.



*Picture 4.18*  
(00:24:19)



*Picture 4.19*  
(01:28:43)

The way Riggan manages to act differently based on different situations, whether he is on stage or off stage, proves that he manages to control his persona. Riggan is not carried away by the character which he plays on stage. After his previews did not get considerable media's attention, but instead his naked walk in Time Square went viral, he realizes that he is an entertainer whose job is to make sensation. His inner voices tell him that who cares if he is not a great actor, he is a movie star and better than all of the theaters folks.

#### **4.2.1.2 Shadow**

Shadow always lingers behind a person's back, evoking him of his unsatisfactory side. It comes whenever it wants, unbothered by the person's desire. Riggan's shadow materializes in his old character Birdman. Birdman appears as inner voices inside Riggan's head, criticizing everything that Riggan does. It keeps telling him of his failures and mistakes of getting into Broadway. It also tells him how he is unfit to be a theatre actor. Riggan tries hard to ignore his shadow but it is always there. The conversation in (00:08:04 – 00:08:28) shows Riggan first encounter with his shadow and how he turns a deaf ear to his inner voices.

Birdman : We were the real thing, Riggan. We had it all. We gave it away  
 Riggan : Breathing in  
 Birdman : We handed these poseurs the keys to the kingdom  
 Riggan : Breathing out  
 Birdman : You listening to me?  
 Riggan : Breathing in. I embrace my anger  
 Birdman : Yeah embrace it. But I'm not going away. You know I'm right

(Iñárritu, 2014: *Birdman* 00:08:04 – 00:08:28)

Ignoring one's shadow is a mistake, for shadow needs to be acknowledged and confronted, not ignored. As Riggan falls harder after the two unsuccessful previews and being humiliated in the newspaper, his shadow emerges again and his inner voices grow more intense. It is getting hard to ignore them. His shadow takes over him in a form of anger. He beats Mike for his humiliating remarks which Mike gave to journalist. The inner voices tell him that he is a pathetic loser and he should just give up on his Broadway career. Riggan struggles hard to disregard them. However, having so much on his mind, Riggan can no longer ignore the voices and he responds to them. The conversation below is the example of Riggan denying his shadow.

Birdman : Oh, you really fucked up this time. You destroy a genius book with that infantile adaptation. Now you're about to destroy what's left of your career. It's pathetic  
 Riggan : Breathing in, I am calm  
 Birdman : Let's get the hell out of here while we can  
 Riggan : I ignore this mental formation. This is mental formation  
 Birdman : Stop that shit! I'm not a mental formation. I'm you, asshole.  
 Riggan : Leave me alone  
 Birdman : You were a movie star, remember? Pretentious but happy

Riggan : I wasn't happy  
 Birdman : Ignorant, but charming. Now, you're just a tiny, bitter cocksucker  
 Riggan : I was fucking miserable  
 Birdman : Yeah, but fake miserable. Hollywood miserable. What are you trying to prove? That you're an artist? Well, you're not  
 Riggan : Fuck you  
 Birdman : No, fuck you, you coward. We grossed billions! You're ashamed of that? Billions!  
 Riggan : And billions of flies eat shit every day. So what? Does that make it good? I don't know if you noticed, but that was 1992  
 Birdman : You could jump right back into that suit, if you wanted to.  
 Riggan : Look at me, look at this. I look like a turkey with leukemia. I am fucking disappearing. This is what's left  
 Birdman : You're an imposter here. Eventually they're gonna figure you out  
 Riggan : What part of this don't you get? You're dead  
 Birdman : We are not dead  
 Riggan : Oh please just stay dead  
 Birdman : We are not dead  
 Riggan : Stop saying "we!" There is no "we!" I'm not fucking you! I'm Riggan fucking Thomson!  
 Birdman : No, you're Birdman. Because without me, all that's left is you, a sad selfish mediocre actor, grasping at the last vestiges of his career.

(Iñárritu, 2014: *Birdman* 00:58:50 – 01:01:05)

His inner voices break his spirit and push Riggan to his breaking point. Jake comes in the middle of Riggan wrecking his dressing room. Seeing Jake is there, Riggan quickly puts a face and pretends that everything is okay. It is portrayed in the picture 4.20. It implies that Riggan does not want people to see his ugly side. Riggan then tells Jake how he is unable to continue the play and he wants to quit. He says that he thinks he is unsuited to direct and act in a play. It

shows that Riggan fails to overcome his shadow and he falls powerless under its influence.

Riggan's shadow in the form of Birdman first appears on screen when he wakes up in the street of New York, after a rough drinking night to forget everything he has been through. Picture 4.21, taken by using long shot shows the physical form of Birdman as real character which Riggan's hallucination creates. It walks behind Riggan, following him wherever he goes. The background song in this scene uses the epic choral music, typically used in action movies to mark the entrance of Birdman. This time, Birdman tells him to stop worrying whether he is a great Broadway actor or not. Birdman continues on saying that Riggan should bring back action and sensation, because that is what Riggan best at and loved for. Instead of arguing or ignoring with his inner voices, this time Riggan actually listens to them. What his inner voices say gives Riggan an insight of what he should do in his opening night. As Jung said, shadow is not consistently bad. It also provides good things like creative impulse and problem solving actions (Jung, 1959: 266).



*Picture 4.20*  
(01:01:42)



*Picture 4.21*  
(01:28:58)

Riggan has acknowledged his shortcomings and he knows how to handle it. He is no longer ignoring or denying it like he used to before. Riggan learns that it is okay he is not influential as a Broadway actor, because he knows how to make up for it. As a result, Riggan arrives at the theatre looking fresh and calm, ready for his opening night. It is proven in the conversation between Riggan and his former wife below

Sylvia	: Are you ok? You seem, I don't know, you seem abnormally calm.
Riggan	: I am calm. I am great actually. You know I got this little voice, talks to me sometimes, tells me the truth. It's comforting. Kind of scary but it's comforting
Sylvia	: I'm gonna pretend I didn't hear you say that.

(Iñárritu, 2014: *Birdman* 01:35:29 - 01:35:57)

#### **4.2.1.3 Anima / Animus**

Anima is the female attributes which lie within male unconsciousness and animus is the opposite of it. Riggan is a man, and based on the theory, within a man there are female traits which unconsciously create the feelings and moods. In the beginning of the movie, Riggan is mostly apathetic towards his daughter because he is too busy with his play. He does not put much attention in his daughter's well-being, even though she has just came out of rehabilitation for drugs abuse. The event which portrays this is when Riggan catches Sam hiding a marijuana. Riggan scolds her without considering her feeling. Sylvia, Riggan's former wife is worried about the lack of attention and affection from Riggan to Sam. Sylvia tells Riggan that he does not need to be a great father, he just needs to be one.

However, later in the movie, Riggan starts to develop the anima within him. Riggan shows an interest in what Sam is doing. They have a talk, asking how each other is holding up. In the picture 4.22, which is taken with medium close up technique, Sam tells him about what she learns in rehabilitation and Riggan carefully listens to her.



*Picture 4.22*  
(01:19:04)

Before the last scene in the opening night of Riggan's play, Sylvia visits Riggan to congratulate and compliment him on his opening night. The opening night so far has been going good. They chat about the old days before they separated. He tells his former wife how he loves her and his daughter. He also tells her how he wished he had spent more time together with them. He regrets not being a good father and husband.

Riggan	: I love you and I love Sam
Sylvia	: I know
Riggan	: I really wish I had videotaped her birth though.
Sylvia	: Why?
Riggan	: 'Cause I missed the moment, really. I don't have it. I should have just been there with the two of you. You know, just the three of us.

(Iñárritu, 2014: *Birdman* 01:37:44 – 01:38:12)



#### 4.2.1.4 Self

Self is the goal of the process of individuation and the center of the psyche. It is the union of the conscious and unconscious. At the end of the movie, Riggan has achieved to manage his persona, face his shadow and, acknowledge his anima. Therefore, he has obtained a balance in all the different parts of his psyche. The assessment of Riggan's self archetype can best be explained in the scene where Riggan shoots himself on stage.

On the surface, Riggan's act of shooting himself on stage can easily be seen as a mere suicide attempt. The movie does not explicitly tell whether it is intended as a suicide method or a dedication to his play. However, the way Riggan aims his pistol at his head shows that he does not plan to kill himself. It can be seen in the picture 4.23, which is taken with medium close up, portraying Riggan from his back. His aim is far from his head and the bullet hits his nose, which is not vital. Had he wanted to shoot himself dead, he would put his pistol closer and aimed right into his head.



*Picture 4.23*  
(01:42:28)

Riggan's act of shooting himself on the stage does not only represent his commitment to his play, but also a realization of his true nature. By shooting himself on stage, Riggan gives people what he is best at (sensation, violence, and blood). He presents them with who he truly is, in the form of what he wants people to know him of (a Broadway theatre artist).

Riggan's act of shooting himself arguably could also symbolize the death of Riggan's old personality as individuation sometimes is called a "psychological rebirth". He kills his old personality both literally and metaphorically. The old Riggan is now replaced with fully individuated Riggan which has a more harmonious balance of the psyche.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

*Birdman (The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance)* as a movie has successfully adapted the concept of individuation by Carl Gustav Jung into its main character in the story. Individuation is the process of finding one's true self by uniting the conscious and unconscious aspects from one's inner self. Jung put emphasis on the importance of unconscious in the process of individuation. He divided unconscious into two, personal unconscious and collective unconscious. Personal conscious is unique to each individual, since it comes from repressed urges and memories. Collective unconscious is universal to all people, since it consists of instinct and archetype that are inherited from our ancestors. The main archetypes that play important parts in the process of individuation are namely persona, shadow, anima or animus, self.

The process of individuation is illustrated in the mid-life crisis journey of the main character of *Birdman*, Riggan Thomson. The archetypes of persona, shadow, anima, and self are shown respectively in the Riggan's manners and actions throughout the movie. The first archetype, persona, a mask that people wear in order to fit in, is demonstrated in Riggan's efforts of trying to put a new face as a Broadway artist. The shadow, the archetype that one always tries to hide, comes from Riggan's old character, Birdman. The shadow manifests in Riggan's hallucination of Birdman and inner voices which Riggan hears continuously. Anima, the female psychological traits within men, is represented in Riggan's

heart that has softened for his former wife and daughter at the end of the movie. The most important archetype self, is achieved when one has recognized and faced all of the other archetypes. It is the goal of individuation process. Riggan has encountered and conquered all of his archetypes to obtain a balance between the conscious and unconscious. He has gained an understanding of the self and therefore completed the individuation process.

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